

~~like An Iron Bell~~

~~LETTER WRITER #3 (to Sugar - Dear Sugar, My question is about love)~~

~~(SUGAR now sees LETTER WRITER #3)~~

~~I'm at the age where most of my friends are married. The closest I've been to the altar was when I was the best man. I had three relationships. One casual, one serious and one current. There was one issue with the casual one. I was up front about not wanting to settle down. The second one started out casual and I broke it off when she got serious. I had both a lover and a friend.~~

~~For about four months now, I've been dating another woman. She seems like she's falling in love with me. I want that word LOVE. I don't want to say that word out loud because it seems loaded with promises that are fragile and easily broken. My question is, when do I have to take that big step and say, I love you? And, what is this love thing all about anyway?~~

~~Signed,~~

~~Confused~~

SUGAR. Dear Confused...

~~I agree with you, well that's helpful advice.~~

~~Dear Confused...~~

~~You certainly must be confused if you're confused. Oh, that's good writing. I will just repeat your word back to you.~~

~~Please don't let me be lame by which others live their lives affect yours. NO...~~

Dear Confused,

The last word my mother ever said to me was love. She was forty-five, and so sick and weak she couldn't muster the "I" or the "you," but it didn't matter. That puny word has the power to stand on its own.

I was twenty-two and I wasn't with my mom when she died. No one was. She died alone in a hospital room and for many years it felt like my insides were frozen solid because of that. I ran it over and over in my mind, the choices I made that kept me from being beside my mother in her last hours, but thinking about it didn't do a thing. Thinking about it was a long dive into a bucket of shit that didn't have a bottom.

I would never be with my mother when she died. She would never be alive again. The last thing that happened between us would always be the last thing. There would be the way I got my coat and said, "I love you," and there would be the way she was silent until I was almost out the door.

~~LETTER WRITER #2 (to Sugar - mother) I love you, please?~~
~~(SUGAR sees LETTER WRITER #2 as her mother)~~

SUGAR. And, there would be the way that she was still lying in that bed when I returned the next morning, but dead.

My mother's last word to me clanks inside me like an iron bell that someone beats at dinnertime:

~~LETTER WRITER #2 (to Sugar's mother) I love you, love,~~

SUGAR. I'll bet you think this has nothing to do with your question, but your question and my answer are about love.

Love is the feeling we have for people we care about and hold in high regard. It can be light as the hug we give a friend or heavy as the sacrifices we make for our children. It can be fleeting, everlasting, conditional, unconditional, stoked by sex, sullied by abuse, nourished by humor.

The point is, you get to define it, ~~you get to decide how I didn't mean to fall in love but I did. You appear to have for this woman. You convinced yourself that not thinking about my mother will shield you from getting hurt.~~

Sugar - Monologue #2